

Nevada Social Studies Standards Civics Glossary

Capitalism: An economic system in which all or most of the means of production, distribution, and exchange are privately owned and operated for profit.

Citizen: One who owes allegiance to a nation and is entitled to its protection.

Civil court: A court that handles cases relating to disputes between two or more individuals or organizations.

Command economy: An economic system in which the government makes economic decisions.

Communism: An economic and political system in which property and goods are owned by the government and products are shared by all.

Concurrent powers: Any powers that may be exercised by both the federal government and state governments.

Constitution: Body of fundamental law, setting out the basic principles, structures, processes, and functions of a government, and placing limits upon its actions.

Criminal court: A court that handles cases relating to the violation of law.

Delegated powers: Those powers the Constitution grants or delegates to the national government, such as expressed powers, implied powers, and inherent powers.

Democracy: A form of government in which political control is exercised by all the people, either directly or through their elected representatives.

Enumerated: Those powers specifically stated in the U.S. Constitution.

Federalism: (or federal system) A form of political organization in which governmental power is divided between a central government and territorial subdivisions (i.e., states).

Foreign policy: The actions and positions that a nation takes in every aspect of its relationships in world affairs.

Implied powers: Those powers of the government inferred from the enumerated powers: those ‘necessary and proper’ to carry out the expressed powers.

Interest groups: Organized bodies of individuals who share some goals and try to influence public policy to meet those goals.

Juvenile court: A court that handles cases specifically relating to minors.

Local government: A county and/or municipal governments that may include special districts.

Mixed economy: An economic system in which the government both supports and regulates free enterprise.

Monarchy: A government where a king, queen, or emperor exercises supreme powers.

Nation-state: A political community that occupies a definite territory and has an organized government with the power to make and enforce laws without approval from any higher authority.

Natural rights: Belief that individuals are naturally endowed with basic human rights as opposed to rights conferred by law.

Parliamentary system: A form of government that gives governmental authority to a legislature that selects the executive from its own members.

Political party: A group of people with broad common interests who organize to win elections, control government, and influence government policies.

Popular Sovereignty:

Presidential system: A government where voters elect the president, or chief executive, for a fixed term of office. Voters also elect members of the legislative branch.

Public policy: All decisions and actions of government.

Representative government: A form of government in which power is held by the people and exercised indirectly through elected representatives who make decisions.

Reserved powers: The powers not delegated to the national government by the Constitution, nor prohibited to the states, are reserved to the states, or the people.

Rule of law: The principle that every member of a society, even a ruler, must follow the law.

Rule of man: The ability of government officials and others to govern by their personal whim or desire.

Social contract: Agreement of all the people in a society to give up part of their freedom to a government in return for protection of their natural rights.

Socialism: An economic system in which the government owns the basic means of production, determines the use of resources, distributes products and wages, and provides social services such as education, health care, and welfare.

Supremacy Clause: Article VI, Section 2 of the Constitution, which states that the Constitution, laws passed by Congress, and the treaties of the United States “shall be the supreme law of the land and binding on the states.

Totalitarianism: (or dictatorship) A system of government in which a single leader or group has complete authority to rule.

Tribal government: (or tribe) A political entity with the right to self-government.